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Revealed— Swede Spy Alert: 1959

A Special Correspondent
STOCKHOLM.

Sweden was shocked yesterday by the disclosure that four Cabinet members of the Socialist government knew years in advance that Col. Stig Wennerstrom, under arrest as a Russian spy, was suspected as a security risk.

Defense Minister Sven Andersson received the first warning from the security police in 1954.

Both Interior Minister Rune Johanesson and Justice Minister Herman Ekling were informed by intelligence agents in March, 1952, and Foreign Minister Arvid Nilsson in September of last year.

This was the first revelation of a Special Investigation Commission into the Wennerstrom affair.

The commission also disclosed that Justice Minister Ekling had asked Premier Erlander in April last year whether he wanted to

see a report about "a colonel employed in the Foreign Office who was considered a security risk."

Newspapers of all political shades yesterday sharply criticized Premier Erlander and his government for not acting sooner, thereby allowing Wennerstrom to continue giving valuable military information to the Russians. Some newspapers went so far as to demand the Premier's resignation.

Mr. Erlander, however, declared yesterday that neither he nor the Defense Minister nor any other member of the Cabinet plan to resign. He said that "a timetable as to when various government members were informed about Wennerstrom was not sufficient to establish responsibility."

The newspaper Expressen declared Mr. Erlander faces the gravest crisis of his seventeen years in office. It said:

"The report of the inquiry commission is more frightening than anyone could have imagined. It is the picture of a government without inner connections, without decision, and it reveals carelessness and indifference beyond all bounds."

The conservative Bygghuset Dagbladet commented "No explanation can conceal the fact that the government despite alarming reports failed to take measures in the most serious and damaging case of treason that has occurred in our country in modern times."

Opposition party leaders renewed their demand last night for participation in the inquiry commission. They demand earlier rejection by the government.

Although this government faces a severe political test it is considered certain to outlive it with its small, but safe majority in Parliament. No election is scheduled until the autumn of 1964.

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